

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

Executive Summary

In accordance with Section 9.4 of the City's Charter, the City must utilize the services of the Miami-Dade County Police Department for local patrol services for a minimum of three years, after which time, the City may elect not to renew the patrol police services contract with the County. The following Feasibility Report examines the options available to the City of Miami Gardens for the provision of police services and forms a basis for the development of a municipally run Police Department should the City determine it would like to pursue that alternative.

This Feasibility Report addresses issues that could influence the success of establishing a municipal Police Department, assesses the advantages and disadvantages, proposes solutions to issues raised, and includes a cost/benefit analysis which covers concerns such as cost, revenue, and strategic considerations. Ultimately, the purpose of this Feasibility Report is to provide the City with a firm basis to determine whether sufficient merit exists to continue with the establishment of a municipal Police Department.

The first step in the development of this Feasibility Report was to examine all the possible options available to the City of Miami Gardens for the provision of Police services. Each option was thoroughly reviewed in a way that did not stifle imagination and innovation. Once each option was thoroughly explored, they were ranked according to the City's goals, constraints and other external issues. And finally, a recommendation was formed that provides a clear definition of the future direction based on the analysis of all available information.

The City in Brief



Miami Gardens, incorporated on May 13, 2003, is one of thirty-five municipalities in Miami-Dade County, Florida. With a population of 105,414, it is the third largest city in Miami-Dade County (after Miami and Hialeah). The city is located in North-Central Miami-Dade County and covers an area of approximately 20 square miles. The boundaries are from I-95 and NE 2nd Street on the East; NW 47th Avenue and NW 57th Avenue on the west; Countyline Road on the north; and 151st Street on the South. The

City is blessed with a central location, midway between Fort Lauderdale and Miami, and is easily accessed by I-95, the Palmetto Expressway (SR 826) and the Florida Turnpike. It has rail access via the Florida East Coast Railway and the South Florida Tri-Rail System.

Background Information

The City of Miami Gardens is presently serviced by the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) as dictated by an interlocal agreement (**Exhibit A**) that was entered into on July 27, 2004, in accordance with Section 9.4 of the City's municipal charter. The Miami-Dade Police Department is the largest law enforcement agency in the southeastern United States serving an ethnically and racially diverse community. The Department provides both traditional and municipal police and sheriff services to Miami-Dade County and four contractual municipal areas including Miami Gardens. The personnel compliment consists of approximately 3,000 sworn officers and 1,500 civilian budgeted positions. MDPD is both internationally and state

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

accredited. MDPD operates nine district stations that provide police services to a population of over 1.4 million people in unincorporated Miami-Dade County. In addition, the Department's Police Operations Bureau provides decentralized patrol services to Jackson Memorial Hospital, the Port of Miami, County rail and bus transit locations, Fisher Island, and unincorporated areas of Key Biscayne. The Department's Special Patrol Bureau provides specialized patrol services to include marine patrol, dignitary protection, special response teams, bomb disposal, emergency operation of a mobile task force, hostage negotiations, traffic enforcement, and canine assistance. The Strategic and Specialized Investigations Bureau operates a Homeland Security Unit that functions as the departmental liaison with other agencies and coordinates with MDPD entities to strengthen domestic security, including prevention, preparedness, protection, response and recovery capabilities. The Department maintains Mutual Aid Agreements with all the municipalities within Miami-Dade County and surrounding counties.

The Communications Bureau provides radio dispatch and complaint reception services for MDPD and subscribing police agencies. The Complaint Desk received over 2.2 million calls during Fiscal Year 2003-2004. The Communications Bureau also provides emergency complaint reception service for the Miami-Dade Fire Department.¹

Municipal Charter Provisions



Section 9.3 of the municipal Charter of the City of Miami Gardens (**Exhibit B**), which was adopted by the qualified electors on May 13, 2003, provides that the "City shall pay from its municipal funds, for specialized law enforcement services to be exclusively provided by the Miami-Dade Police Department in perpetuity. Payment amounts and other pertinent terms relating to the provision of specialized police services shall be set forth in a contract between the City and Miami-

Dade County (**Exhibit C**). In addition, Section 9.4 of the City's Charter provides that the "City shall exclusively utilize the Miami-Dade Police Department for a specific level of patrol staffing for an initial period of three years. The utilization of the Miami-Dade Police Department for local patrol services may only be terminated for cause during this initial three (3) year period. Payment amounts and other pertinent items relating to the provision of local patrol services shall be set forth in a contract between the City and Miami-Dade County (**Exhibit A**). Such contract shall also provide that "the initial three-year period" shall commence upon the execution of the Local Patrol Contract by all parties. At the end of the three (3) year period the City may elect not to renew the Local Patrol Contract at which point a transition period of no less than twelve (12) months will begin."

Deadline for Decision Making

The commencement date of the "initial three-year period" of the Local Police Service Contract is December 1, 2003, therefore, the City must determine if it will elect not to renew the contract by November 30, 2006, and notify the County prior to that time. Should the City opt to establish its own Police Department, operations may commence as early as December 1, 2007. Attached as **Exhibit E** is a proposed timeline for the transition.

¹ Miami-Dade County Portal. <http://www.miamidade.gov/mdpd/BureausDivisions/director.asp>

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

Current Police Services Provision

As mentioned previously, the City is currently serviced by the Miami-Dade Police Department via an interlocal agreement for local police services. According to the Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Annual Operating Budget (**Exhibit D**), the Police Department local services contract will cost the City \$18,650,258 plus an additional \$185,000 to cover grant matching funds, studies and additional overtime for target crimes. The School Crossing Guard Program is a City operation and is not included in the figures below. The total cost for Local Police Services through the County and City budgets equals \$18,835,258 as detailed in the table below.

Table 1. Current Budget

CLASSIFICATION	FY 2005 ACTUAL EXPENSES As of 6/30/2005	FY 2006 COUNCIL ADOPTED
PERSONNEL SERVICES:		
All Positions (See Table 2.)		
Flex Dollars		
Longevity Payments		
Overtime		
Compensated Absences		
Payroll Taxes		
Retirement Contributions		
Health and Life Insurance/Fringe Benefits		
Workers Compensation Insurance		
Sub-total Regular Salaries	\$ 14,950,467	\$ 15,6544,000
TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	\$ 14,950,467	\$ 15,6544,000
OPERATING EXPENSES:		
Policy Charges		
Overhead		
Travel and Per Diem		
Communications and Freight Services		
Utility Services		
Rentals and Leases		
Insurance		
Repairs and Maintenance		
Repairs and Maintenance – Vehicles		
Printing and Binding		
Promotional Activities		
Other Current Charges		
Office Supplies		
Operating Supplies		
Operating Supplies – Unif. Allowance		
Operating Supplies – Fuel		
County Overhead		
Dues, Subscriptions and Publications		
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ 3,114,753	\$ 3,106,000
CAPITAL OUTLAY:		
Capital Outlay		
Capital Outlay – Vehicles		
TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY	\$ 0	\$ 0
TOTAL POLICE DEPARTMENT	\$ 18,073,965	\$ 18,835,258

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

The Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Budget figures are based on a staff level of 169 positions broken down as follows:²

Table 2. Existing Staffing History

Authorized Positions Police Department Contract	Fiscal Year 2004 ³	Fiscal Year 2005	Fiscal Year 2006
Full Time – Sworn Personnel			
Major	1	1	1
Captain	1	1	1
Lieutenant	6	6	6
Sergeant	17	17	17
Police Officer	120	120	120
Full Time – Civilian Personnel			
Data Entry Specialist I	1	1	1
Office Support Specialist II	0	1	1
Secretary	2	2	2
Administrative Secretary	1	1	1
Public Service Aide	8	8	9
Record Specialist	4	4	4
Station Specialist	1	1	1
Crime Analyst Specialist I	4	4	5
Total Authorized Positions	166	167	169

In addition to the Local Police Services, MDPD provides Specialized Police Services. This function will be conducted by the County in perpetuity, regardless if the City opts to establish its own Police Department. Specialized Police Services is defined as narcotics, criminal intelligence, economic crimes, homicide, robbery, sexual crimes, environmental crimes, domestic crimes, and crime scene investigations; property and evidence; and tactical operations activities.

The cost for Specialized Police Services for Fiscal Year 2006 totals \$6,968,400. **Therefore, the total cost for all police services incurred by the City of Miami Gardens for Fiscal Year 2006 is \$25,803,658.**

Establishing a Municipal Police Department

When assessing the feasibility of establishing a municipal Police Department, several factors that contribute to the success of the endeavor must be explored such as the economic impact to the City, the political environment surrounding the decision to create a new department, administrative and institutional considerations, as well as interest group advocacy.

Economic Impact

In an effort to determine the cost of establishing a municipal Police Department, an analysis of Police Department budgets for several comparable cities was conducted. The following cities in

² Letter dated June 24, 2005, addressed to City Manager Danny O. Crew from Assistant Director of Support Services for the Miami-Dade Police Department J.D. Patterson.

³ Mutually agreed upon minimum number of requisite police patrol staffing as described in Interlocal Agreement for Local Police Services.

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

the tri-county area were included in the initial study due to their similarity in population size and geographic size:

Table 3. Police Department Comparison

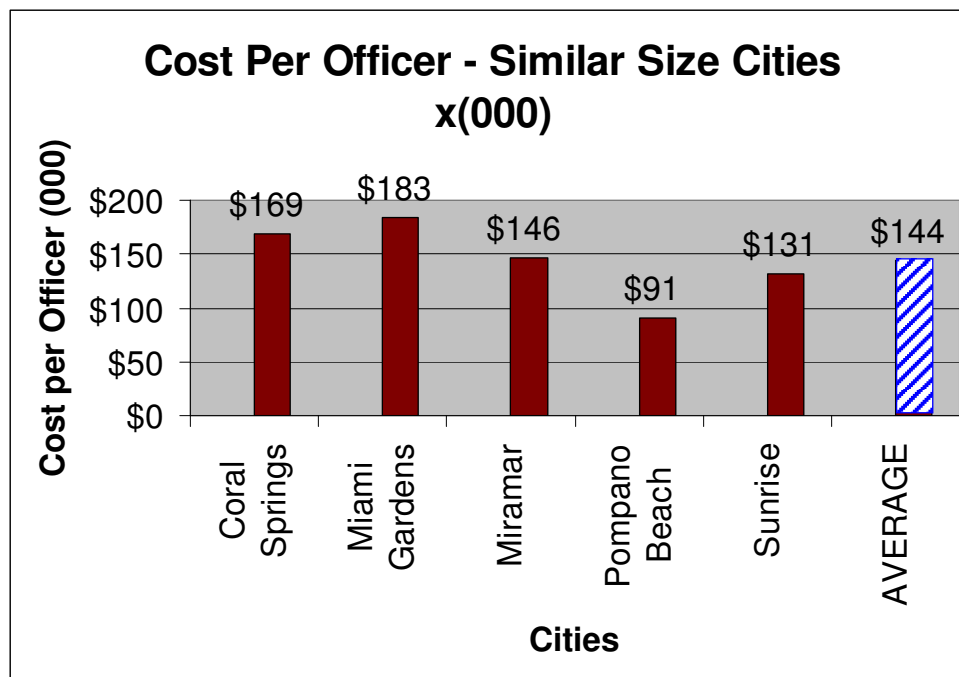
City	Population	Department Size	Square Miles
Boca Raton	83,960	\$28,267,100 FY 2005 198 Sworn 104 Civilian Number of calls information not readily available.	29.6
Coral Springs	126,852	\$34,467,668 FY 2006 204 Sworn 100 Civilian 170,000 Service Calls 72,000 Emergency Calls	23.5
Davie	81,845	\$25,338,294 FY 2005 180 Sworn 66 Civilian 72,000 Service Calls	34.24
Ft. Lauderdale	170,297	\$77,058,949 FY 2005 495 Sworn 240 Civilian 159,389 Service Calls	33
Hollywood	142,998	\$60,039,212 FY 2006 338 Sworn 198 Civilian 130,821 Service Calls	28.87
Miami Beach	91,540	\$67,988,027 FY 2006 386 Sworn 164 Civilian 152,000 Service Calls	7.1
Miami Gardens	105,414	\$26,589,223 FY 2006 145 Sworn 24 Civilian 131,336 Service Calls 5,431 Emergency Calls	20
Miramar	101,813	\$26,772,504 183 Sworn 143 Civilian 76,071 Service Calls	31
North Miami	60,100	\$13,844,365 FY 2006 131 Sworn 50 Civilian Number of calls information not readily available.	9.5
Pembroke Pines	150,435	\$33,198,897 250 Sworn 80 Civilian Number of calls information not readily available.	37
Plantation	54,604	\$27,214,936 192 Sworn 152 Civilian 52,000 Service Calls	22.8

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

City	Population	Department Size	Square Miles
Pompano Beach	87,184	\$30,140,426 FY 2005 331 FTE BSO Contract Number of calls information not readily available.	22.65
Sunrise	88,976	\$23,508,594 FY 2005 179 Sworn 100 Civilian 204,000 Service Calls 60,000 Emergency Calls	18
West Palm Beach	97,708	\$43,646,390 FY 2006 271 Sworn 121 Civilian Number of calls information not readily available.	55

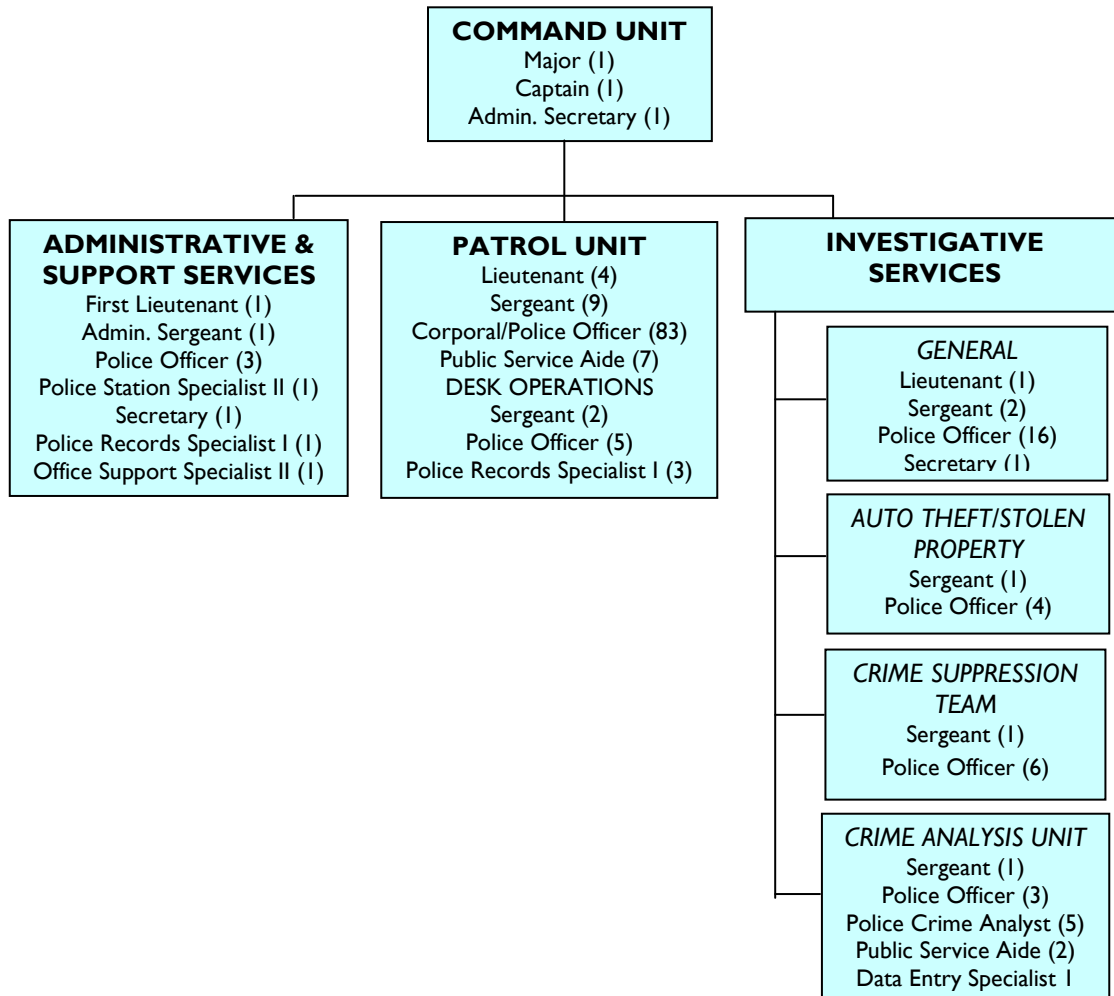
It is important to note that each Police Department represents a unique combination of service level needs, resources and functions. Therefore, the previous comparison should only serve as a snapshot of the expenditure range and department size range for similarly sized communities - each municipality has different needs and service level requirements which drive their respective budgets. Of the fourteen departments researched, the four municipalities that most mirror Miami Gardens in square miles and population size are Coral Springs, Miramar, Pompano Beach and Sunrise.

Another way to look at it by average cost per officer. This also is not always apples-to-apples since different departments budget different operations in different ways; however, it is another indicator.



A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

Presently, the Department is organized as follows:

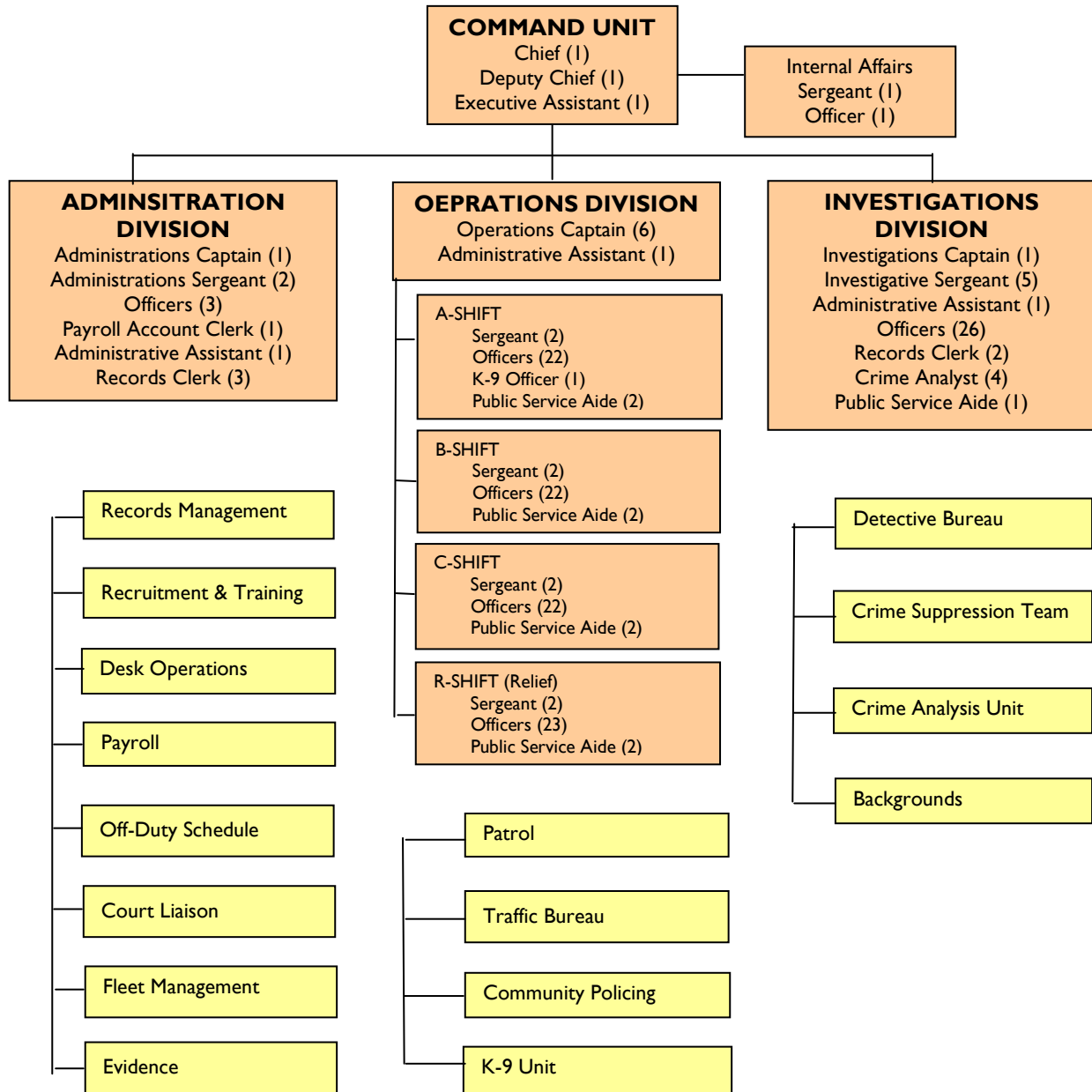


Proposed Organizational Structure

The Miami Gardens Police Department would be a full-service Law Enforcement Agency providing a wide array of services to residents. For the purposes of this feasibility study, the proposed Department would consist of three divisions. The minimum staffing level per shift is 8 officers, as is the case currently with the MDPD Miami Gardens Division. It should be noted that this proposed structure is tentative and would be subject to substantial change upon hiring of a Police Chief and senior staff, as their experience and expertise would be critical to the establishment of a final working structure.

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

Below is a hypothetical organizational chart, built on the same number of personnel as is currently assigned to Miami Gardens:



The proposed Miami Gardens Police Department contains the Command Unit and three divisions: Administration, Operations, and Investigations. The Chief of Police commands the day-to-day operation of the department, with the support and assistance of the Deputy Chief.

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

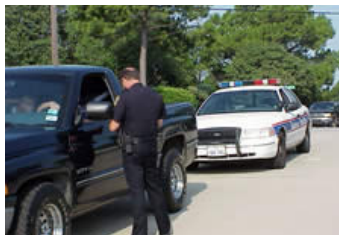
The command unit also oversees the Internal Affairs function. Each division functions under the supervision of a Captain.

Administrative Division Functions



The Administrative Division provides the support functions for the Department. This division is responsible for the recruitment functions including coordinating oral boards, psychological exams, and background investigations for new employees. This division is also responsible for the coordination of employee training, fleet management, payroll, records management, case filing, coordinating court subpoenas and other administrative functions.

Operations Division Functions



The Operations Division is responsible for the protection of life and property through the enforcement of laws and ordinances. Their duties include the local patrol function, crime prevention via patrol techniques and interaction with the citizens, School Resource Program, traffic enforcement and safety programs including emergency preparedness.

Investigations Division Functions



The Investigations Division is charged with locating those individuals responsible for criminal activity through investigation, information, interview interrogations and scientific analysis methods in order to recover stolen property and assist in the successful prosecution of defendants. This division also targets illegal drug sales and gang activity within the City. The division is able to process crime scenes, collect and store evidence and match fingerprints.

Should the City of Miami Gardens take this important step and establish its own Police Department, the policing efforts will be refocused on the city's neighborhoods, giving the community policing teams greater responsibility for fighting crime and establishing ways for the police and community to work together to solve neighborhood problems. The establishment of a department that embraces community policing ideals will redirect the City's resources toward a reduction in crime while achieving greater organizational accountability.

The proposed organizational structure is meant to enhance the City's ability to fight crime by:

- Redistributing police resources in the community. Sworn personnel — detectives, investigators and uniformed officers — are being redistributed throughout the community. The City will be divided into six Neighborhood District Areas, in order to better distribute our police resources within the community.

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

- Cutting bureaucracy. The existing structure through Miami-Dade County creates excessive bureaucracy and makes coordination between the City and the County cumbersome and inefficient. The municipal Police Department involves a more logical and streamlined command system which promotes team work, communication, geographic accountability for fighting crime, and places more authority in the Sergeant level, closer to the street.
- Creating full-service police districts. Key operational services — patrol, investigations, focused missions, traffic and prevention — are being placed in the districts.
- Establishing geographic accountability throughout the organization. The new Department organizes the city into six neighborhood districts, each led by district operations captains who are accountable for managing resources and coordinating efforts throughout the assigned neighborhood districts. This creates a complete system of geographic accountability for fighting crime.
- Streamlining the business side of the organization. Administrative and technical functions are being consolidated under a unified command that can more efficiently provide the tools, training and technology that are critically important to field personnel.
- Creating the capacity to continuously improve the Department. A focus on strategic planning will identify opportunities to improve the organization and develop innovative strategies and programs that meet the needs of Department personnel.

This new organizational structure is a significant departure from the way the Miami-Dade Police Department is organized. The proposed municipal Police Department structure represents nothing short of a transformation from a bureaucratic, incident-driven agency to a streamlined, customer-driven service organization; one that is focused on forging alliances with the community to more effectively fight crime and solve problems.

The proposed structure for the municipal department promotes a team orientation in fighting crime. All operational units will be organized by geographic area. As a result, all units will share the same goals and be held accountable for achieving the same results. At the same time, the new structure will support the commitment to community policing. It will bring a wider range of police services closer to the customer, thus encouraging the partnerships and problem solving that are key to effective community policing.

Proposed Departmental Operating Budget

In order to effectively assess whether the City should pursue the development of a municipal Police Department, it was necessary to develop a proposed operating budget that detailed the cost information associated with personnel, regular operating expenses and capital outlay. To facilitate the comparison, the proposed budget was prepared using the same line item accounts as are used in the current MDPD operating budget. In addition, the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2007 includes non-recurring capital expenditures that will occur only at the start-up of the new department should the City decide to pursue that option.

Below is a table that lists the proposed positions for the Miami Gardens Police Department which corresponds to the proposed organizational chart on page 8 of this report. The proposed organizational structure has two additional full time positions than the existing

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

department as run by Miami-Dade County. Some functions were reorganized in such a way that would allow six more patrol officers and does away with the Lieutenant and Major levels.

Table 4. Proposed Staffing

Proposed Positions Miami Gardens Police Department	Fiscal Year 2008
Full Time – Sworn Personnel	
Chief	1
Deputy Chief	1
Captain	8
Sergeant	16
Police Officer	120
Full Time – Civilian Personnel	
Executive Assistant	1
Administrative Assistant	3
Payroll Account Clerk	1
Records Clerk	5
Crime Analyst	4
Public Service Aide	9
Total Authorized FT Positions	169

In order to formulate a proposed operating budget for a municipally run Police Department, a salary survey was completed for the proposed positions. Attached as **Exhibit F** is the breakdown of the results of the salary and benefits surveys.

Table 5. Salary Schedule

CLASS	JOB TITLE	SALARY SCHEDULE	
		Minimum	Maximum
EEF-40.0	Police Chief	\$95,000	\$125,000
	Deputy Chief	\$80,000	\$100,000
	Police Captain I	\$68,000	\$92,000
	Police Captain II	\$74,000	\$98,000
	Police Captain III	\$78,000	\$105,000
NEF-40.0	Crime Analyst	\$34,000	\$44,000
	Public Service Aide	\$24,000	\$34,000
	Payroll Account Clerk	\$26,000	\$36,000
	Police Officer I	\$36,000	\$52,000
	Police Officer II	\$40,000	\$57,000
	Police Officer III	\$45,000	\$60,000
	Police Sergeant I	\$52,000	\$68,000
	Police Sergeant II	\$57,000	\$72,000
	Police Sergeant III	\$63,000	\$78,000
	Public Service Aide	\$24,000	\$34,000
	Records Clerk	\$24,000	\$34,000
	Executive Assistant	\$28,000	\$38,000
	Administrative Assistant	\$24,000	\$32,500

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

Table 6. Proposed Municipal Police Department Budget

CLASSIFICATION	FY 2006-2007 PROJECTED TRANSITION EXPENSES	FY 2007-2008 PROJECTED CITY EXPENSES	FY 2007-2008 PROJECTED COUNTY EXPENSES	FY 2008-2009 PROJECTED CITY EXPENSES	FY 2008-2009 PROJECTED COUNTY EXPENSES
PERSONNEL SERVICES					
Chief	x	\$ 110,000			
Deputy Chief	xx	90,000			
Captain (8)	x	602,000			
Sergeant (16)	x	451,500			
Police Officer (120)		5,820,000			
Executive Assistant (1)	x	38,000			
Administrative Assistant (3)	xxx	112,000			
Payroll Account Clerk (1)		31,000			
Public Service Aide (9)		319,000			
Record Clerk (5)	x	87,000			
Crime Analyst (4)		156,000			
Sub-total Regular Salaries	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 7,816,500			
Flex Dollars		0			
Longevity Payments		0			
Overtime		750,000			
Compensated Absences		300,634			
Payroll Taxes		597,962			
Retirement Contributions		1,385,588			
Health & /Fringe Benefits		1,311,739			
Workers Comp. Insurance		503,920			
TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	(Incl. above)	\$ 4,849,843			
OPERATING EXPENSES					
Professional Services		156,824			
Other Contractual Services		22,220			
(County Police)		[3,388,452]			
Investigations		15,000			
Travel and Per Diem		5,080			
Communications & Freight Svcs		156,960			
Utility Services		16,200			
Rentals and Leases		30,100			
Repairs and Maintenance		5,000			
Repairs \$ Maintenance – Vehicles		156,125			
Printing and Binding		31,600			
Other Current Charges		25,000			
Office Supplies		20,000			
Operating Supplies		359,161			
Operating Supplies – Fuel		332,100			
Dues and Publications		101,046			
Non-Police Costs	300,000	492,900			
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ 1,965,000	\$ 1,925,316			
CAPITAL OUTLAY: (C)					
Capital Outlay - Building		250,000			
Capital Outlay – Equipment & machinery	100,000	2,500,000			
TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY	\$ 100,000	\$ 2,750,000			
TOTAL POLICE DEPARTMENT	\$ 3,150,000	\$ 20,730,117*	\$ 20,372,215	\$ 18,035,325	\$ 21,187,104**

* Higher due to paying for County police for 2 months overlap

** Used Budget FY 05-06 and increased by 4% per year

x Early fill positions

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

(A) The Personnel Services section of the budget pertains to all costs associated with staff, including salaries and benefits. In order to obtain the most fiscally conservative figures, the FY 2007-2008 projected personnel expenses uses the salaries set at the average amount for each position rather than the minimum salary amount. The health and life insurance benefits and the compensated absences were established utilizing the current benefits schedule available to all existing City employees.

(B) The Operating Expenses section of the budget accounts for the daily and recurring expenditures for the department as well as one-time expenses that are part of the initial set-up of the department which are valued at less than \$1,000 and therefore, not considered major capital outlay expenditures. Examples of some one-time expenses includes psychological testing for pre-employment, some non-recurring general office supplies, uniforms, weapons and badges, etc.

(C) The Capital Outlay Expenses section involve costs for large capital items such as the debt service payment for the Police Station, 150 marked police cars, 10-12 non-marked units, radar units for police cars, debt payment for mobile data terminals for the police vehicles, computers, furniture, riot gear and telephone system.

A detailed breakdown of all the budget line item amounts may be found in **Exhibit G** of this report, though some have been revised since these tables were first developed.

Transition Costs FY 2006-2007

One of the most difficult aspects of transitioning from the County police to a City police department is the transition itself. There are two parts to this. First is the cost of the transition; and second is the availability of personnel (discussed in the next section). Here I will discuss the cost concern.

In creating a new department, there are a number of one-time costs that must be accounted for in the pre take-over year. These costs are significant and cannot be absorbed in the regular City budget. They include the core staff needed to prepare the department prior to formal start-up; the support staff outside the police department needed for start-up and on a continuing basis; and all the expendables and equipment a new department needs to be ready for day-one of the take-over. These costs include the necessity to have an overlap of personnel immediately prior to startup. Column one in Table #6 above (FY 2006-2007) estimates these costs at \$3.67 million. A major funding hurdle for City Council is bridging this transition year financially. Such a funding decision must be made by this coming July or sooner. It should be noted that whatever funding source is used, it should be able to be lowered within the following two years, depending on what additional police resources are desired.

The first full year of operation, FY 2007-2008, is illustrated in Column two. It is estimated that the total cost to run the department would be \$16.95 million, or approximately \$3,000,000 cheaper than what our County charges are estimated to be in FY 2007-2008 (Column three).

Other Issues

There are several other issues that could affect the success of the new department. The greatest challenge will be the initial start-up of the organization and the recruitment of the 146

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

sworn positions necessary to initiate an organization at the same service level that currently exists through Miami-Dade County. Police Departments are seeing staff shortages across the United States.⁴ The challenge to hire good, experienced officers for the new department will necessitate the establishment of a highly competitive compensation package to entice seasoned officers to come work for the department. It is recommended that the recruitment process for the police department administration begin 18 months prior to the transition to allow time to set up all the departmental policies. The recruitment process for the patrol officers should commence between 6 to 8 months prior to the transition date.

All sworn personnel will be required to be certified in the State of Florida, but it is recommended that the City not limit its search to only Florida Certified officers. The recruitment process should seek candidates that are “certifiable” in Florida and make the certification a condition of continued employment whereby, the employee would be required to obtain the Florida Certification within six months of being hired. Additionally, the City may wish to sponsor younger candidates through a Police Academy to fill positions.

Once established, another issue that could affect the success of the department is turnover. There are several factors that traditionally contribute to high turnover rates which include job salary and benefit satisfaction, frustration with department, frustration with justice system, and job and family stress. “No agency can guarantee employee retention; however, the manner in which an officer is transitioned into the department can have a significant impact on their opinion of the department, their job performance, and their decision to stay.”⁵ The key to staff retention can be broken down into the following categories: Competitive salary and benefit package, quality relationships amongst coworkers, meaning and purpose, promotion and personal growth opportunities and positive quality of life. These focus points should be integrated into the goals and objectives for the new department.

Political Environment

A decision such as creating a municipal police department must take into consideration the current political environment. Being that the City of Miami Gardens is a newly incorporated government, one can safely conclude that the impetus behind the move to incorporate was rooted in an overall dissatisfaction of service levels and a desire for self-governance and greater control.

While the Miami-Dade Police Department has been providing services under the existing contract with the City, recurring issues have surfaced over the last two years that have raised concerns in the City. Namely, continuing problems with level of service and accountability in the following areas of interest:

- I. Police Visibility: Presently, the community (both residents as well as business owners) have expressed frustration regarding the perceived lack of citywide police presence. While this issue has been communicated to the Miami-Dade County Police Department, noticeable improvements have been slow to place to date. Patrol zones appear to the residents as to be limited to major thoroughfares rather than internal neighborhoods.

⁴ Hall, Mimi, “Police, Fire Departments See Shortages Across USA”, USA TODAY, November 28, 2004.

⁵ McKeever and Kranda, “Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Police Personnel”. Best Practices Guide, International Association of Chiefs of Police.

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

2. Proactive/Community Policing Strategies: The Department has not shown a consistent interest in the overall community and until recently, repeated complaints regarding quality of life crimes have gone largely unaddressed. Through active participation in community activities such as Optimist sports, community groups such as Crime Watch and Homeowners Associations, a local Police Department invests in the community and establishes itself as a pivotal partner with the residents. Police department's traditionally aid in establishing a positive community identity. This has not happened consistently with the County police services. An example of this is the inability of the Miami-Dade Police Department to man the local Optimist sporting events due to a lack of officer interest in off-duty community assignments. This lead to the embarrassing fact that we had to hire off-duty Highway Patrol officers for these events.
3. Enforcement of Local Ordinances: Until recently, the Miami-Dade Police Department has declined to enforce local ordinances that are not a part of the County-wide code (See letter, **Exhibit I**). This posed a serious problem in that the City was unable to enforce rules and policies that are specific, unique and a high priority to our community. For example, the City was experiencing problems with people riding All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) through residential neighborhoods. Subsequently, the City Council adopted an ordinance banning the use of ATVs in residential neighborhoods and on city property. When advised of the new law, the Miami-Dade Police Department initially declined to enforce the local ordinance, thereby essentially rendering the ordinance useless. As of this past month, the County has agreed that they will enforce such codes where there is a criminal penalty attached. This has helped the situation; however, it only points to the lack of responsiveness that is inherent with an outside service agency operating as a department of the City, whether it is police, parks, finance or other operation.
4. Value for Cost: There are a number of functions that have a direct effect on the bottom-line costs incurred by the City for police services over which the City has little or no control: Staffing issues, overhead costs, purchasing policies, collective bargaining negotiations, to name a few, are all functions of the service contract to which the City has little or no input. The lack of control over various administrative functions has had a negative impact on the level of service as well as cost. In addition, the City is obligated to pay for every service not specifically detailed in the contract. For example, there have been instances where the department has been in need of basic office equipment and has had to turn to the City to purchase that equipment for them, although the City pays the overhead for the department as part of the existing service contract.
5. Accountability: Presently, there is no meaningful method of auditing the true cost of the services provided by Miami-Dade County. This poses a problem in that increases to such costs are difficult to challenge. Attempts at obtaining such information regarding costs have been met with mixed results from County staff.

Administrative and Institutional Considerations

Should the City decide to establish its own Police Department, it should be aware of potential issues arising from competing or overlapping jurisdiction with Miami-Dade County. Interaction between the two policing entities will continue as the City is bound to use Miami-Dade County for all specialized police services in perpetuity. It is essential that the two entities establish a

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

solid, cooperative working relationship from inception to maximize positive results for both agencies.

Due to the overlapping jurisdictional issues, complimentary internal procedures and constant communication, especially between the Investigations Division and the Specialized Police Services Units at the County, will be necessary in order to minimize duplicated efforts and optimize the department's ability to fight crime and get the greatest value for the City's nearly \$7 million payment for specialized services.

The establishment of a new municipal Police Department utilizing community policing ideals will help foster community identity and pride. It is important that the department function internally with a team oriented approach that capitalizes on geographic accountability for each neighborhood district. All operating procedures should focus on streamlining processes and lateral communication among the different Divisions in order to successfully implement the principals of community policing.

An additional administrative consideration is what effect the creation of a municipal Police Department may have on general government support functions. For example, the Police Department will be operating with an elaborate computer system that includes desk top computers, mobile data units in the vehicles and possibly a CADD/GIS system to track crime trends. These systems will require support personnel in the form of an IT person which will have a budgetary impact which includes the cost of salary, benefits, social security and workers' compensation.

The proposed Police Department will add 169 new employees to the overall City staff. The increase in personnel will necessitate the addition of personnel in the Human Resources Department to handle the work related to recruitment and continuing personnel functions such as benefits and risk management. Also, the addition of 50+ computers and dozens of other peripherals will require an IT Technician to handle the volume. The addition of these positions will also have a budgetary impact including salary, benefits and overhead.

The addition of 150-160 vehicles for the department will require that the City hire a Fleet Maintenance Coordinator who will be responsible for scheduling routine maintenance as well as any special maintenance requests for all the patrol cars and other department issued vehicles. The addition of a Fleet Maintenance Coordinator will have an additional budgetary impact including salary, benefits and overhead.

The creation of a municipal Police Department will necessitate the addition of personnel in the Purchasing Division to handle the additional buying needs for the department. The addition of a Buyer to assist the Purchasing Manager will have a continuing budgetary impact.

The increase in overall financial activity will necessitate an additional accountant in finance and finally, the department will require a Public Information Officer (PIO) to handle press inquiries.

Interest Group Advocacy

Interest groups will play an important role in the success of a new Police Department. For example, groups representing collective bargaining units, local businesses and citizens will sometimes compete and conflict with one another. Should the City decide to establish its own municipal police department, it is recommended that one of the preliminary objectives be a

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

public relations campaign geared towards informing the community of the benefits of having a local police department. Due to the impact on the Miami-Dade County Police Department should the City decide to opt out of the contract, it is anticipated that objections may be raised in any number of areas. An aggressive educational campaign will be necessary prior to the final decision to opt out of the police contract in order to educate the public regarding the recurring problems with the existing arrangement and the benefits of creating a new department.

A strategy for the public relations campaign to ensure community buy-in should be developed as follows:

1. Public Meetings: Prior to the City Council making its final decision, it is recommended that the City discuss this decision in a public meeting or workshop setting to allow the Council to gauge resident opinions related to the existing Miami-Dade County police services and determine the residents' level of satisfaction with the current contract. These meetings will provide the City with a clear picture of resident perception of the issues and provide a solid base for the informational campaign that would follow.
2. Meetings with Community Leaders: Prior to the City Council making its final decision, it is recommended that City officials reach out to those community leaders that have a stake in the outcome and that have a vested interest in the success of the Police Department. For example, Crime Watch Groups, Homeowner's Associations, Churches, etc. During this phase, the City should discuss with the leaders the recurring problems with the existing system, listen to any additional concerns and introduce the idea of establishing a municipal Police Department.
3. Community Newsletter: Prior to the City Council making its final decision, the results of this feasibility study should be published in the quarterly newsletter in order to disseminate information regarding recurring issues with the existing County services contract and cost figures that show the City can establish its own department at a significant savings which could translate into more police presence.
4. Meet with the Press: Develop a white paper that details the benefits of creating a municipal police department and submit together with a copy of the Feasibility Study to the members of the media. Subsequently, interviews regarding the decision to create the municipal Police Department should be facilitated.
5. Information on the Web Site: Develop a page on the City's web site that provides information regarding the transition, including a copy of the survey results, feasibility study and timeline.

Conclusion

The preceding sections of this study have sought to present a detailed analysis of the feasibility of establishing a municipal Police Department. Several observations can be made by way of conclusion, concerning this policy decision. The decision to establish a department hinges on several factors, such as cost, possible start-up obstacles, existing political environment, administrative and institutional considerations and interest group advocacy.

The following cost comparison between the current costs associated with the Miami-Dade Police contract (see Table 1) and the proposed Municipal Department (see Table 6) shows that

A Feasibility Report for the Establishment of a Municipal Police Department

a decision to establish a municipal Police Department would translate into a significant savings totaling approximately \$3.5 million during the first full year.

Est. FY 2008-2009 County Police Budget	FY 2008-2009 Projected Municipal Police Budget	Difference Cost Savings from Establishing New
\$ 21,187,104	\$ 18,035,325	\$ <u>\$3,151,779</u>

This savings figure is believed to be a conservative representation due to the fact that average salary figures were used in the calculations for the personnel expenditures. Some of these savings will be needed to address issues which we have overlooked. Once those needs are addressed, any surplus funds may be used to augment the police services in the area, thereby improving the level of service provided to the City, and or reducing the revenue needed for the transition year.

This report recommends an organizational structure that embraces community policing ideas and is geographically responsive. By dividing the City into smaller neighborhood service districts, residents and business owners will benefit from a more concentrated police presence in their respective neighborhoods which should translate into decreased crime. Additionally, community identity and pride will be improved due to greater interaction between the agency and the community.

The biggest obstacle to developing and operating a Police Department is the recruitment of sworn personnel. By expanding the search area for police candidates, the City will make certain that it is recruiting quality employees to man the department. Additionally, by addressing early issues such as competitive salaries and benefits, promotional opportunities within the department, as well as the overall operations, the City will successfully retain its personnel.

The existing political environment, in light of the recurring problems with the existing police services contract, is such that a decision to establish a municipal Police Department is feasible. A balance will need to be struck between the two governmental entities which will be expected to coexist and cooperate on police operations involving specialized police units as the County will retain those functions. Therefore, it is important to foster a good inter-agency relationship as well as establish internal procedures that streamline communication and operations to avoid the duplication of efforts between the two entities.

Finally, community buy-in is essential to the success of a municipal Police Department. Community input will help identify public sentiments regarding the existing services and issues of public concern, as well as gauge support for the establishment of a municipal department and measure backing for possible increase in taxes to improve levels of service. A comprehensive public relations campaign that includes public meetings, meetings with community leaders, media coverage and information dissemination via the City's newsletter and web site will facilitate the transition should the Council decide to opt out of the County's contract.